

WRESTLING FORUM

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VOLUME VI

ISSUE 13

WRESTLING'S BEST KEPT SECRET

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WRESTLING AS WE KNOW IT

The events of the past couple of weeks have really been hectic. News has flown in and out of here with regularity, each new day bringing with it more rumors and fiction filled "facts." The WWF is embarking on a road never before taken, WCW seems to be more screwed up than usual with no one for sure who's in charge, and a couple of independent promotions making a lot of loud noises, but not advancing out from their caves.

I was on vacation from August 10-14 and the motel we stayed at not only didn't have a phone in the room, but TV's were also considered non essential for survival. When I got back on the 14th, all Hell had broken loose and the phone has yet to stop ringing.

Because of everything that is going on with Ric Flair, the WWF and WCW, you will find a special page devoted to the situation rather than having it covered in the respective reports on either promotion. This way, I can update things until the last minute before it goes to the printer.

Before getting too far into things, we'd better tell you that this is Wrestling Forum and we publish somewhere around the 15th and 30th of each month. Cost is \$1.50 per issue and you may subscribe for up to six months worth at one time. All correspondence, renewals, and whatnot, should be sent to the following address until further notice: **WRESTLING FORUM, BOX 65, KNOXVILLE, IL 61448.**

Next issue will mark my final turn as editor of this newsletter. Our new editors/owners will take over from there, however, I will still be handling the subscriptions and stuff for a while. They do not own a computer, so it's much easier for me to handle stuff on this end until they make arrangements up there. This is part of the reason stuff is still supposed to be sent here to Knoxville.

I've gotten an awful lot of calls since I've been back about the editorial I wrote last issue called "It'll Never Happen." It had to do with Ric Flair joining the WWF and how a Hogan Flair match would never happen and/or draw money. I'm still skeptical, even with the events of the past few days (which you'll be reading about soon) that Flair will wind up with the WWF. For those of you who are saying, "Gee, Gallagher really has egg on his face this time!", my reply is, "It ain't over till it's over!" I don't have any kind of inside information as to what's going to happen, but just this gut feeling from watching so many years of wrestling.

If we do end up with a Flair Hogan match...you can be guaranteed that I'll admit my mistakes in that article; and by far, it'll be the biggest mistake/projection I've made in six years of reporting wrestling.

With that, let's get on to some stuff that's more fun, mainly the rest of the bulletin and most notably, the Wrestling Barometer....

the **WRESTLING BAROMETER**

Welcome back to the all new and exciting Wrestling Barometer, the unique census of what's hot and what's not in professional wrestling, presented exclusively each month in *Wrestling Forum*.

Response this time was extremely encouraging, probably due to the events of the past 30 days. We'll take an in depth look in a moment, but first, let's review how Barometer entries are tallied.

Five points are given for a first place vote, three for a second place vote, one for a third place vote and half a point for any item that is included on a voters list from fourth place on. Finally, a minimum point total is arbitrarily decided upon for inclusion in the column so we can focus on the month's major trends. Now, on to the July Barometer:

WHAT'S HOT

(NEEDED TO QUALIFY: 15 POINTS)

1. **RIC FLAIR LEAVES WCW (54 POINTS)**
2. **Global Wrestling Federation (22 points)**
3. **Randy & Liz speculation (16 points)**

WHAT'S NOT

(NEEDED TO QUALIFY: 15 POINTS)

1. **GREAT AMERICAN BASH PPV (40 POINTS)**
2. **Jim Herd and Dusty Rhodes' administrative abilities (36 points)**
3. **Hulk Hogan's Steroid confession on Arsenio Hall show (22.5 points)**
4. **WWF drug testing (20.5 points)**
5. **Scaffold match (15 points)**

NOTES: Talk about unanimous decisions! We featured a record number of ballots this time with almost everyone agreeing on the #1 hot topic, but a variety of 2nd place votes on kept many items out of the top spots due to a total point total of less than 15. On the dark side, One reader said that his top two choices (listed above) were as hot as a glacier. Yep. That about sums it up! All but one ballot featured the top two choices in one place or the other. Those who mentioned the WWF drug testing noted the hypocritical nature of the tests for the reasoning behind being listed.

Deadline for August ballots is September 12. Send ballots to:

**WRESTLING BAROMETER
BOX 65
KNOXVILLE, IL 61448**

I•N•D•E•P•E•N•D•E•N•T•L•Y S•P•E•A•K•I•N•G

GLOBAL WRESTLING FEDERATION

First, a postcard from Stephen Meyerson of Brooklyn which reads:

How comprehensively have the newsletters covered the GWF? They have not even once mentioned the English Lords (former GWF tag champs) and neglected to point out that Billy Black won a tag tourney in Japan. The newsletters have failed miserably at capturing the international stature of the GWF and Joe Pedicino should be annoyed.

We stand corrected and thank Stephen for pointing out our shortcomings in this area.

Tournaments continue here, and personally, I'm getting a little tired of them. They were all right as a novelty and to get things off the ground, but they seem to be depending on them now rather than using creative booking and angles. The latest tournament was for the North American title which was won by the Patriot. This caused him to vacate his TV title that he won just a couple weeks back and I'm sure there'll be another tournament to determine the new champion.

One angle they did (this is old, but I haven't had the space to comment) involved Jim Cornette, Stan Lane and Steve Cox. Cornette told everyone that Lane was such a good tag team wrestler that he didn't need a partner so they'd take anyone who didn't already have one. Cox (who when he was with Watts' UWF was one of the worst workers even though he tried hard) was the one selected. In their first match in the tournament, Lane got in trouble, Cox saved the day and he and Lane won a first round match. Cornette and Lane celebrated and shunned Steve when he tried to join in. Well done.

Since the group has gotten national exposure on ESPN, two wrestlers have already been lured away by other promotions. Although I don't believe in coincidences, especially in wrestling, this may have been one. Nick Busick is headed for Titan, but that's due more to his good friend Sid Eudie being there, and Cactus Jack is headed back to WCW and I know that had been in the works for some time now.

OTHER INDEPENDENTS

Herb Abrams' UWF may be in trouble. It's possible they will be losing their spot on SportsChannel. Abrams sent some tapes to a consulting firm that does a lot for SportsChannel and was told

that he was trying to promote 1950's wrestling in the year 2000. I believe that his contract with the cable network ends in the next month, and possible he was trying to renew the contract when he was told this. The consulting firm used was based in Denver and has some sort of ties (though loose ones) to Titan.

Joel Goodhart promoted another Tri-State show in Philadelphia on 8/3 in which one of the bloodiest matches in history took place. Actually, several bloody matches, all involving the same two guys: Cactus Jack and Eddie Gilbert. In their first match of the evening, it was to be a falls count anywhere in the building match. They brawled all over the building, including concession stands, souvenir stands, and a stage area. Gilbert bladed in the match and several ringsiders were splashed with the blood. Jack took the match after an elbow drop off the ring apron, pinning Eddie on the arena floor.

In the second match, billed as a stretcher match, Eddie nailed Jack in the forehead with a beer bottle. Cactus didn't have to blade; the bottle broke (this was not a worked bottle) and sliced Jack's forehead. It took a battle to get Jack to stay on the stretcher, but Eddie finally accomplished it and was declared the winner.

The third match of the night between the two was a cage match which was described to me by three different fans as being downright disgusting. There were great bumps including Jack getting crotched on the top of the cage after Eddie dropkicked the cage. Jack fell all the way to the arena floor. Blood was everywhere and the match ended up with Doug Gilbert coming in to beat on Jack before Bam Bam Bigelow made the save. Included in the "less than family atmosphere" was Doug sucking up some of Jack's blood and spewing it at the crowd.

Goodhart announced at the show that the next card on 9/21 would feature Terry Funk vs a "former or current World champion." He wants everyone to think it's Flair, but word has it that if Flair can't do the show, Jerry Lawler is ready to take his place so there is no "false advertising."

There was to have been a Ladies Professional Wrestling Association PPV this month, but due to lack of just about everything (including finances, a place to hold it, and workers) that's been put on hold until after the first of the year. They didn't mention lack of publicity, but when I was called to be told it was canceled, it was the first I had heard of it period.

Dennis Coraluzzo, sometimes partner of Joel Goodhart and other times partner of Larry Sharpe, has a card set for this weekend in Blackwood, NJ which will feature Terry Funk vs Bob Backlund on top.

// // PENCIL POINTS // //



DISGUSTING EVENT

I would like to make a nomination for "most Disgusting Event of the Year." This morning on International World Class Championship Wrestling, Mario Savoli was doing retrospective commentary on a 1986 Bob Backlund vs Johnny Rodz match. The retrospective commentary was done over the original commentary, which Savoli had also done. While Savoli said several times that he didn't want to take anything away from Bob Backlund, he spent much of his commentary doing just that.

First, he reported that Backlund retired shortly after Hogan beat Iron Sheik for the WWF title. After suggesting that Backlund probably wanted no part of the new champion, Hulk Hogan, he said that most wrestling observers conclude that Bob made a wise decision to retire when he did. To support that conclusion, Savoli strongly implied that Backlund would be way out of his league today against such stars as "Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior and Ted DiBiase." Moments later, he noted that Backlund probably would have needed to face Tony Atlas on his way back to a title shot, another event that Savoli said probably helped Bob decide to retire! The capper came as Savoli went to interview Bob after the match as he left the ring surrounded by throngs of young admirers. Since all the original sound was erased, we could not hear what Backlund said. Savoli told us, however, that Bob Backlund used those few moments to challenge everybody around. To further denigrate Backlund, though, he concluded that anyone can challenge long distance, but good wrestlers have to get in the ring and prove what they can do face to face.

I may be a minority of one, but I find this kind of thing disgraceful. For one thing, I remember the kind of wrestler Bob Backlund was, and is. To say that he retired because he feared the new breed of giant wrestlers is an insult to anyone's intelligence as well as a plug for steroids. Evidently, part of Vince McMahon's deal with IWCCW includes the stipulation that they bury wrestlers who haunt Vince from the days when pro wrestlers really wrestled. I recommend a big dipstick award for McMahon and Savoli on this one. May we not see more of such behavior in the future.

I just read that Sting recently beat Nikita Koloff via count out in a Texas Death match. As I said in my last letter, WCW has a real problem in ignoring the stipulations of their matches. Why should anyone get excited about seeing a Texas Death Match, a loser leaves town match, a loser must unmask match, a stretcher match, or anything else when we all know that the match won't be as advertised?

•DON G. SMITH•
•CHARLESTON, IL•

GARY JUSTER

I knew Gary Juster (WCW promoter) before he became such a big shot with the NWA/WCW. He was one of the nicest guys you would ever find, willing to talk, and generally a big wrestling fan. He has spent more than one evening across the table from me, eating supper.

I ran into him again the other night. He acted like he didn't know me. Finally, he "remembered" only to excuse himself because he was busy. He disappeared around a corner and stood there, waiting for me to leave.

Before then, I would never have believed the accusations of shoddy business that were leveled against him in your July 30 issue. I would never have stood for your slam, "Gary has never been accused by this publication of having a lick of business sense."

But after meeting him for those few seconds, and eventually him having security come out and ask me to leave, I have to wonder just what it is that corrupts so in this business.

I wonder why you haven't come out against him before now.

•NAME WITHHELD BY EDITOR•

•WASHINGTON, DC•

POTTY MOUTH

I know that you've gone off the deep end sometimes when it comes to profanity and vulgarity on wrestling shows. I thought I would share an experience with you.

At the Not So Great American Bash, Rick Steiner, the All American boy grabbed the house mike and yelled at Dick Murdoch, "***** YOU!"

I'm no prude. I use the word myself. But never around children. There was a family seated just down the row from me that nearly had spasms when he did that.

When they use that word in the movies, it automatically gets an R rating. WCW should post signs warning the same.

By the way, is that the magic word you have to hear (as an umpire) to eject someone?

•BEN GILLIAM•

•PHILADELPHIA, PA•

*Editor: They can use that word all they want as long as they don't use it as an adjective to describe me, or as a verb, suggesting what I should do. ("That was the ***** worst call I ever saw!" - he stays. "That was the worst call I ever saw, you ***** !" - he goes)*

World Championship Wrestling

Last issue, we led with the rumored firing of both Jim Herd and Dusty Rhodes. A subscriber had informed us that the *Miami Herald* had run a story that day, stating that Herd and Rhodes had both been fired. The subscriber was not able to locate a copy of that paper and sportswriters at the *Herald* told us they were unaware of a story to that effect. We apologize for the error.

No, as of right now, Nermal Sr. and the Pizza man are still in charge. However, Jim Herd has been called on the carpet by Jack Petrick, his boss, for the dismal failure of the company. The rumor hit here on 8/4, a Sunday night (one reason we weren't able to confirm it) and we went to press the next day. Herd was in St. Joseph, MO for the WCW taping there that night, but Dusty was not seen. Herd had to fly back to Atlanta on Tuesday for a meeting and Dusty was seen in Iowa where the TBS show was taped the next night. Herd's assignment once he hit Atlanta was a 5000 word essay on how he proposed to right the company and start showing a profit.

We have also be able to learn that Herd's contract with Turner expires this coming January. Dusty's contract as booker (reportedly worth in the neighborhood of \$300,000 per year) expires in January 1993. To get rid of either, Turner would have to buy out the remainder of their contracts.

Speaking of Herd, he blew the perfect chance to put WCW in a positive light when he announced that WCW would not be testing its wrestlers for steroids. According to Herd, it isn't that much of a problem, and that his wrestlers are grown men who should know right from wrong. Yeah, Jim, and state prisons across this country are filled with innocent people who also should know right from wrong. This announcement is probably more damaging to the company than his stance where he ignored the issue entirely.

From the TV tapings here in the Midwest, several things happened. Ron Simmons is being set up to be the next challenger for Lex Luger's title. It started after a Simmons' squash match when he called for "the guy with the belt." Harley Race and Mr. Hughes came to ringside instead, joined later by Luger. All three jumped on Ron until Barry Windham did a run in for the save. This clears up Barry's babyface turn which almost no one caught the first time around. Barry and Ron had a stare down for a few minutes before they promised to watch each others' backs. The result will be Luger feuding with Simmons with a few matches with El Gigante (that makes sense, doesn't it?) thrown in as well.

Sting got to help introduce another newcomer and another new feud. They brought out a large box for him and he spent the obligatory time wondering who would be sending him a present. He can cross all his "friends" off the suspect list because Abdullah the Butcher came out of the box and beat the living snot out of him.

Cactus Jack is back in, but showed the first night of tapings while Eddie

Gilbert was miraculously rehired only to no show both nights. You will recall that Eddie got out of his contract with WCW some months back by claiming he had an arm injury that prevented him from wrestling. He didn't want to collect money for just sitting at home, so he quit and asked for his contract to be torn up. Less than a week later, he was main eventing every night in Memphis against Jerry Lawler. Well, anyway, back to the present, Eddie was supposed to be back, but they wanted to bring him in as a babyface and he wasn't happy about that. So, I guess he just decided not to show up.

They are setting up a lighthweight division and Gilbert was to play a big part of that. He was to have wrestled Ricky Morton in the finals of a tournament on the next Clash of Champions (set for 9/5 in Cleveland), so it looks like they will have to find another opponent for Morton to beat.

Brian Pillman is being announced for upcoming cards. I guess that since Barry Windham turned, he no longer has the bounty on the mask of the Yellow Dog, so there's no need for Pillman to work under the hood anymore.

Weightlifter Bill Kazmaier has been teaming with Rick Steiner in Scott's absence. Look for them to get to the finals of the tournament to crown the new tag champs since Rick and Scott were stripped of the belts.

These people don't only not know what they're doing, they don't have a clue! I just saw the ad that was sent to video stores advertising the latest Bash PPV tape. Guess who they claim is in the main event. Yep. Luger and Flair. They've only had six weeks to correct those flyers! You know, if any other business in the United States tried to pull this crap, the government would be investigating them to high heaven and there would be some major league fines handed out for misleading advertising. I guess the thing is, fans are willing to complain to each other but not to the Better Business Bureau or their Attorney General's office. Lord knows complaining to Jim Herd and the other buffoons at WCW falls on deaf ears.

Just when you thought it was safe to turn on the TV again Dept.: Oz is back. Another Herd brainstorm.

The American Patriots four man tag team has been dropped in favor of a two man American Patriots team featuring Chip the Firebreaker (Curtis Thompson) and Private (Todd) Champion. They debuted on the latest set of tapes to absolutely no reaction.

For all two of you who care about the World Six Man titles, they changed hands in St. Joe with Big Josh, Tom Zenk and Dustin Rhodes taking the titles from the Freebirds & Badstreet.

My thanks to super correspondent Bruce Grummert for phoning in the results of the TV tapings.

We have confirmed that Verne and Greg Gagne were in the Atlanta office two weeks ago (thus spurring part of the rumored firing of Herd and Rhodes from last issue - the Gagnes were named as possible replacements). Officially, we're told it was to discuss a syndicated TV package. Unofficially, well, it was Jack Petrick that they met with, not Jim Herd if that tells you anything.

Phantom of the Ring

by Ed Garea

THE EVOLUTION OF THE STEREOTYPE, PART II

The end of the first World War also signaled the beginning of a new era in American society which was reflected in its sporting life.

America awoke to find itself shocked by the Black Sox scandal of 1919. Baseball was in deep trouble. College football was making large new inroads. Boxing was beginning to take off. The first million dollar gate was only a few years away. And the sport of professional wrestling was emphasized and the integrity of the sport seriously brought into question.

The effect of this scrutiny was to foster a "battlefield" mentality within the game. The promotions grew tighter and no information was leaked to the press. Toots Mondt, a former policeman for Frank Gotch and Charley Cutter among others, formed a liaison with Strangler Lewis, Jack Curley and Ray Fabiani. Mondt revolutionized wrestling through the use of the telegram to standardize results around the country. Mondt did not actually have to be there to determine results; he could simply telegraph the winners to whatever promoter was staging the card using the Trust's wrestlers.

This, in turn, led Mondt and Lewis to homogenize their product. America was in the midst of an "All-American" sports boom. Babe Ruth dominated baseball, Jack Dempsey dominated boxing, Red Grange would come to dominate college football. The image was fresh and strictly All-American. Mondt and Lewis knew that if wrestling was to compete, their image must be in line with the prevailing image. So, wrestling began to become "American": College Football types were pushed at the expense of older ethnic types. Wayne Munn and Gus Sonnenberg were in and Stan Zbyszko and Ivan Podubny were out. The mainstream of professional wrestling was now mainstream American.

The emphasizing of All-American types was fine and dandy for media exposure, for the absence of ethnic types automatically flashed a no corruption sign to the public at large. For the American public, the ethnic was a person to be looked at with suspicion, for the odds were that he was either an anarchist (Sacco & Vanzetti, or the hundreds caught by the notorious A. Mitchell Palmer "red raids" of 1919) or an underworld figure (Al Capone, Johnny Torrio, Dion O'Bannion, Hymie Weiss, Arnold Rothstein). This image was further enhanced by the knowledge that Rothstein was the person who fixed the 1919 World Series. The media also had an easier time playing up the All American types. They were more accepted than the ethnics, for whom it was difficult for the media to push. Strangler Lewis gained nationwide acceptance as a great fighter while Stan Zbyszko was mocked in Eugene O'Neill's "The Hairy Ape."

Yet, there was still that market of ethnics that begged to be exploited. During the past decade, the growth of wrestling in ethnic neighborhoods was astounding. Wrestling began to be identified as an ethnic sport in cities such as New York. As the market was there, it would be foolish for a good businessman not to take advantage of what was there. Enter Jack Pfeffer.

Pfeffer was an expatriate Russian Jew who fled his homeland during the

Revolution of 1917. Trained in the ballet and working as a promoter, he found obtaining employment in his field in America next to impossible because of his ethnic background. He went to work for Mondt in the New York wrestling office and learned the business. During his time there, Pfeffer came into contact with many European wrestlers looking for work. These wrestlers were always at the bottom of the card, if there at all. Yet, Pfeffer noticed that crowds showed up to see these wrestlers and figured that there was a market for this talent. What Pfeffer did was to market these ethnic wrestlers in their own neighborhoods, holding small cards in each. A Russian neighborhood in Brooklyn would see the Russian champion defend his title against a worthy challenger, and an Italian neighborhood a few blocks away would see the Italian champion defend his title against another worthy challenger. Often the challengers were one and the same person.

Considering all the neighborhoods in which to promote and the natural shortage of available wrestlers, it was not difficult for Pfeffer to change their identities. John Doe was a Russian on Monday, an Italian on Tuesday, a Pole on Wednesday, a Jew on Thursday, and a German on Friday. The champions were usually well known wrestlers within the community, such as Ivan Podubny or Jimmy Londos, but sometimes there were not always what they were made to seem. Pfeffer passed off both Paul Boesch and Dave Levin as Jewish, though both were not. Levin's real name was George Wenzel and was Lutheran.

In reality, though, Pfeffer was actually running a crude equivalent to baseball's farm system. If an ethnic wrestler showed the stuff of a champion drawing card, he would be elevated to the big time cards run by Mondt, Lewis and Curley. If necessary, his name would be changed to something more "American." His bonafide "stars" were usually over-the-hill wrestlers like the Zbyszkos and Podubny (who didn't come to these shores to wrestle until the age of 60). However, call it what you will, it was still extremely profitable and gave Pfeffer the chance to make a major challenge to the established promotion during the 30's along with another promoter who made his bones pushing Irish wrestlers in Boston: Paul Bowser.

What gave Pfeffer his impetus was the Depression. The Depression made the sports dollar even tighter and wrestling was not on anyone's must-see list. Wrestling continued to thrive in the ethnic neighborhoods because of its low ticket price and because it presented what the public wanted to see. As the glamour wore off the college football types, the ethnic wrestlers began to be accepted back into the mainstream. Jimmy Londos went over for the major version of the world's championship and two of his persistent challengers were Rudy Dusek and Dr. Harry Fields, a Czech and a Greek. With the coming of the 30's, wrestling would change its ethnic identity and never look back.

Next: The Thirties

Doing it with Flair

Since Ric Flair and WCW parted ways on July 1, rumors have been flying as to what his future would be.

Naturally, speculation had Flair headed to the WWF before either side had contacted the other.

Last issue, we did a two page editorial, speculating why Flair and Hogan would never meet.

This issue, it looks like the match may become a possibility.

This past weekend on all the syndicated Titan shows, they showed Flair's NWA championship belt (Flair himself paid for the belt and is the owner) and said that there was another wrestler out there who claimed to be world champion. Bobby Heenan showed off the belt to Gorilla Monsoon, saying that comparing this belt to Hogan's belt was like comparing ice cream to manure. He mentioned Flair by name and said that he was presently under contract with another group.

This marks the first time that Titan has acknowledged either the existence of another group or a wrestler's past. We are assured that they will not be calling the other organization by name (NWA or WCW), but that they will consider Flair as a world champion.

Here's where the situation gets very sticky. Flair is under contract until September 1. Titan cannot negotiate with him until after that date. They are very confident that they can sign Flair after 9/1, so much so that they are already taking steps to promote the Flair vs Hogan match up.

However, Flair, who is still under a personal service contract to Ted Turner, is being made offers from WCW even as we speak. He has reportedly been offered the booker's job in WCW, replacing Dusty in that position. He refused the latest offer, but we have it on good authority that if Dusty and Jim Herd are both fired, then he would have a more difficult choice to make.

As I type this, Flair holds a major balance of power in his hand. He could easily screw up Vince and the WWF by not signing with them once he becomes available. He could go back to WCW and say that he made the challenge, but it was not answered. He could sign with the WWF and effectively put a final nail in the coffin of WCW.

As things set today, Flair will be signing with the WWF after 9/1. He will not be appearing at SummerSlam due to legal complications surrounding his contract with World Championship Wrestling.



with help from Bill Burnett

Jerry Lawler lost his unified title to a newcomer called Awesome Kong on the 7/29 card in Memphis. He's already taken it back and Kong is gone, but Bill Burnett is wondering why NO ONE called this the King-Kong feud. Uh, Bill, I think there's a real good reason why!

Wrestling has returned to the Mid South Coliseum after an absence of a couple months or so. The management of the Coliseum and Jarrett Promotions had come to an impasse over rentals and wrestling had moved their 50 dates per year to the smaller Pitkin Building on the Fair Grounds. The Coliseum, faced with the loss of that revenue, plus the loss of Memphis State basketball games (moving to the new 20,000 seat Pyramid this season), agreed to terms with the Jarretts. Part of the agreement calls for more tightly enforced security and the Coliseum will do that by closing down the upper bowl of the building, eliminating what was the general admission section. This will eliminate 5-6000 seats and make the videos of matches from there seem better attended.

Back to wrestling news, another faux pas on the show, but not as noticeable as some. Jeff Jarrett and Robert Fuller were scheduled to wrestle individually against the Barroom Brawlers #'s 1 & 2 on the 8/5 card with the loser of each match having to leave town. The problem? When they did the promos for later on that week, both Jeff and Robert were listed throughout the week, but the Brawlers were not. Believe it or not, Fuller and Jarrett are still with the promotion and the Brawlers have gone on to obscurity. Jeff and Robert's new set of opponents are the Goon Squad, managed by the immoral Boss Winter. Uh, make that Immortal. And make that New Goon Squad since the first and old Goon Squad were dispatched rather easily by the babies.

Play with fire and you'll get burned. Or somebody will. Jerry Lawler was wrestling Leatherface on the 8/5 card in Memphis and loaded up a fireball for him. When he threw it, it was supposed to hit Leatherface in the face, but instead landed on Leather's apron, which, caught on fire. Instead of selling the fireball to the face, he was more concerned about putting out the fire. Lawler helped by grabbing him and helping him roll on the mat. Betcha they exchanged a few words in the dressing room afterwards.

In the past six weeks, they've gotten stuck on one particular gimmick and used it exclusively for a while. First came chairs. It seemed that every match involved chairs flying in or out of the ring. Then came 2 x 4's. Everybody was running around whacking people with boards. Now, it's hair matches. There has been an over abundance of hair vs something matches over the past couple of weeks.

First on the 8/12 Reggie B Fine put up a fake fur coat and Awesome

Kong's title against Jerry Lawler's hair. Lawler regained the title on that show. The second match of the night featuring a hair stipulation was the Dirty White Boy and Girl vs Eric Embry and Miss Texas with the loser of the fall being shaved. Miss Texas wound up getting her head shaved when she was pinned by DWG.

In that match, DWB was replaced by Jeff Jarrett. DWB was "injured" on the 8/10 studio show, necessitating the change. He was attacked by Pritchard and Embry and they took out his knee. The series continues on the 8/19 card with Jeff & DWG vs Embry & Miss Texas with the loser of the fall having a choice of either losing their hair or leaving the USWA. Miss Texas, they reminded us, only has one option should she lose.

Danny Davis and Bill Dundee are feuding over the light heavyweight title. They began as tag team partners before arguing about the upcoming match where they had to face each other. The story line is that the title is going to be defended in Japan on September 7 and the champion is guaranteed a purse of \$40,000. Dundee won the first match with some sort of heel move which I don't remember. The next week, they were matched again, this time with Davis winning. Dundee had Davis pinned, but Davis tapped Bill on the shoulder as the ref counted. Dundee, thinking it was the ref tapping him to let him know he had won, got up and Danny caught him in a school boy for the win. The following week, Davis was out in a suit, doing an interview with the familiar star painted on his face and was yelling for Dundee. He was asking Bill to come out and saying stuff like, "We still friends, aren't we?" Dundee came out and made his way along the front row of fans, slapping hands as he went. He got to the interview area and without a word, decked Davis and left. The two will meet again on the 8/19 card. I'm not sure who's supposed to be the heel or babyface in this one. The winner of the 8/19 match has to win by submission, sleeper or knock out.

New manager in the area is "Honey" Love who turns out to be Christopher Love, known for his gay gimmick. Love did a partial shoot interview on his first show, saying how Lawler had won the AWA title and then the company went bankrupt. Then he took the World Class title and the same thing happened. Love blamed Lawler for putting several wrestlers, including himself, out of work. Love has brought in "Dragon Master" for a shot at the unified title on 8/19.

Old videos were the norm on the 8/17 show. First, they showed Humongous. The one wrestling right now is the same guy who was playing Sampson just a couple weeks ago. The video they showed was when Sid Eudie (Vicious/Justice) was playing the part. Jimmy Hart was at ringside as his manager in the video. Humongous is a babyface at this point.

Another video was shown to introduce an old timer coming back to "Mempho." In the first, he teamed with Steve Regal against Dennis Condrey and David Schultz. The second had him teaming with Dundee against Jos LeDuc and Sonny King. Old stuff, folks. The returnee? Your fav and mine, Jimmy, the Boogie Woogie Man, Valiant. Yech.

World Wrestling Federation

SummerScam is still a couple weeks away, but already we know some of the results. The WWF held TV tapings Portland, ME this past week and it was there that they exposed the finish to at least one match.

Curt Hennig came out for a squash match with his Intercontinental belt but he was interrupted by Bret Hart, his opponent at Scam. They brawled for a while before Bret took off with the IC belt. Later in the show, Bret wore the belt to the ring. That match airs after SummerScam. So much for one title change.

We've also been told, but been unable to confirm, that Virgil also stole the Million Dollar Belt from Ted DiBiase and wore it to the ring for his squash. This may have taken place at the Superstars taping.

Also at the taping, Sherri did an interview where she threatened to slap Randy Savage at the wedding and to "puke" on Liz. Is this a classy lady or what?

Several new characters made their debut on the taping as well. Big Bully (Nick) Busich was there with his new manager, Harvey Whippleman (who we all know and love as Downtown Bruno Lauer). They called Bruno "Herman" at one time to get a chant of "Pee Wee" going and it did. Bruno better have cleaned up his act since the last he was seen, or he won't make it past one of those pop quizzes the WWF randomly gives.

Speaking of pop quizzes, the boys were told prior to this taping that a drug test would be administered at the taping and that anyone who was on steroids should either not show up, get off them, mask them, or something. We're not clear on whether or not there was an actual test or not.

Getting back to the new characters, Repo Man debuted. It's Barry Darsow, formerly Smash of Demolition, who wears a Lone Ranger type mask and ripped gray tights. Word is, he didn't get over in the new character.

Jesse Bolt made his debut, pinning Brooklyn Brawler after a sunset flip. Jesse, who is really Vic Steamboat, did the flip from the top ropes and went way too far. Brawler had to stagger backwards a couple of feet before Steamboat pulled him down. Correspondent Ed Bilodeau suggests it must have been the wind from the dive that felled him.

Skinner, who we know better as Steve Keirn, was on the show and he won his squash match. I think he's a heel, but we're not for sure.

Also on the taping, Randy Savage replaced a no showing Ultimate Warrior and pinned him clean in the middle. That's almost a set in stone rule when a babyface no shows: the replacement has to go over. Anyway, they announced that Savage had been reinstated for "just one night."

If there's any doubt as to what Sid Justice is going to do at SummerSlam (like turning on Hogan), remember this: After Scam, he's scheduled all around the country against Typhoon.

Looks like they're setting the stage for a couple of turns. Jake the

Snake, who is no showing dates due to that bad neck, is teaching Ultimate Warrior the ways of the "dark side." Never mind the fact that that is where Warrior claimed to be from prior to Wrestlemania in Toronto. That has become a casualty of selective amnesia. Jake has stuffed him inside a coffin and taken him out to a graveyard so far.

The current issue of the WWF Magazine has a full page written by Vince McMahon on the steroid issue. It's not much more than self gratification back slapping on Vince's part with him embellishing his family history a bit. The part I find most amusing is the following excerpt:

To this end, in June 1987, on our own initiative, the WWF began a substance abuse program that called for weekly, random drug testing of all out athletes to detect drugs of abuse. In the last year alone, more than 2,500 such tests were administered in more than 100 cities nationwide. Those athletes who tested positive were immediately suspended for six weeks without pay. Second offenders have to complete an accredited rehabilitation program. A third offense results in termination. The WWF pays for the cost of this program. The cost of rehabilitation is shared by the WWF and the offending athlete. When the rehabilitated athlete returns to the ring, his share of the rehabilitation cost is deducted from his next 26 paychecks. This method of repayment serves as a constant reminder of his breach of public trust.

Hulk Hogan is telling people who ask about his weight loss that he's doing a new movie and that the cameras aren't very kind if you're even a few pounds overweight. He's got to "tone up", so he says. You don't suppose that shrinkage is due to him getting off those steroids he took "two or three times" do you?

Speaking of shrinkage, we're being told by those going to house shows that all the wrestlers seem to be shrinking for some mysterious reason. The only exception is Hercules, who one fan described as looking "like he was pumped full of helium."

One of my regular contacts from the WWF called me the other day and said, "Hey, Jon, This is (so-and-so) from the WWF!" I freaked out because usually our phone conversations start out a little less subtle. He explained that since the steroid trial, Vince is beginning to open up to the newsletters and in fact, encouraging employees to talk. I figure he's just trying to get somebody over on his side for once. Anyway, we'll continue to protect our sources because Mr. Hyde might come back at any time.

WRESTLERS ARE PEOPLE TOO

One of our more popular features returns once again to take a look at wrestlers and their personalities outside the ring. The author of this particular installment wishes to remain anonymous. We should add the disclaimer that the experiences of this person may differ from an experience you might have. If you would like to share your experience (you have to include your name, but I'll be glad to withhold it on request), send it along to our usual address. Now, this issue's edition of Wrestlers Are People, Too.

DUSTY RHODES

I saw him in a restaurant prior to matches in (my city). I went up and told him I was a fan from way back and mentioned his days as Dick Murdock's partner as the Outlaws. He never stopped chewing. When he swallowed, he said, "Can't you see I'm tryin' to (deleted) eat, you (deleted)!!?" I didn't get a chance to ask for his autograph.

JIM HERD

Saw him outside the arena. He was nice, tried to intimidate me and my friends with his big booming voice. I asked him about Flair and he said "the ball's in Ric's court. I don't think he's got enough guts to hit it back."

TERRY TAYLOR

Definitely doesn't like to be reminded of his days as a barnyard fowl. He wouldn't sign an autograph.

LEX LUGER

I guess he thought he had to get over as a heel. Basically, he lowered his shoulder without a word and plowed through the little gathering to the dressing room door. He won't get a Christmas card from me!

DUSTIN RHODES

A lot nicer than his old man. I told him what had happened in the restaurant earlier and he said, "Dad's got a lot on his mind right now." He wouldn't talk shop and made a hasty retreat when the questions and comments got too inside.

HARLEY RACE

Seemed to be embarrassed that I remembered the Crusher calling him and Larry Hennig "the Dolly Sisters." When I asked for an autograph, he looked around to make sure the coast was clear and said, "Don't tell NOBODY I did this, hear?" Very nice when approached right.

RESULTS FROM ALL OVER

8/8 BRADENTON, FL (IND) – courtesy of **SHANNON ROSE**... Keno McKenzie beat Great White by DQ...Ian Weston over Rick Ryder... Chris Proctor by DQ over Giant Outlaw...Gator Gillmore defeated Charlie Fields...Man Mountain Brody pinned Zebra Kid...Rick Ryder over Ian Weston...Proctor beat Fields by DQ...Gillmore by COR over Outlaw...**NOTES:** Attendance: 1300...Shannon was special ref for the Brody vs Zebra Kid match...Henry Rains was special ref for last three and got beat up by Giant Outlaw after the last match.

8/10 DES MOINES, IA (WWF) – courtesy of **JOE LIPTON**...Bret Hart beat Barbarian...Duggan downed Iron Sheik...IRS pinned Valentine...Jerry Sags over Marty Janetty...Mountie beat Bossman...Hercules defeated Koko B Ware...Davey Roid Smith over Typhoon...Hulk beat Sgt. Slaughter... **NOTES:** Attendance: 4000...Curt Hennig no showed Des Moines for second time in a row due to his bad back...it was not announced but fans got an extra, unannounced match (Hercules vs Koko) to make up for it....Sean Michaels was also a no show.

8/10 HAGERSTOWN, MD (IND) – courtesy of **PAGE PYNE**...Ax1 Rotten beat Jimmy Stonewall Lawler...midget match...Rosta the Voodoo Mon over Tom Brandi by DQ...Misty Blue pinned Linda Dallas...Nikolai Volkoff over Punisher in I Quit Wrestling match..Neil Superior beat Honky Tonk Man by DQ..**NOTES:** Punisher took off his kneepads and wrestling garb and threw them to audience at end of his match...Brandi DQ'd for using a golf club that Rosta originally brought into ring...Rick Rude was a no show.

8/12 DAVENPORT, IA (WWF) – courtesy of **JOEL KOLSRUD**... Bret Hart over Barbarian (C+)...IRS pinned Valentine (C)...Hercules over Typhoon (D-)...Bushwhackers beat Orient Express (ZZ)...Mustafa Sheik pinned Koko (ZZ)...DiBiase over Virgil (D)...Duggan pinned Slaughter (F)... **NOTES:** Attendance: 3000...Hercules played babyface because Typhoon had turned his back on Hogan (one night turn only)...Hennig was scheduled vs Bulldog but both no showed...Virgil got best reaction of night.

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

First of all, thank you all for the nice letters regarding the sale of the Forum. Please give the new guys a try, as I'm sure they are going to carry on in much the same style. I have seen a mock up version that they did when they were negotiating with me, and other than a little difference in opinions, the style is much the same. Oh, by the way, start getting in the practice of making your checks and money orders payable to Wrestling Forum instead of me. Part of the agreement is for me to take a certain percentage of Forum renewals over the next three months and in exchange, I'll be mailing out the finished product from here in Knoxville until they come up with a computer or program compatible to our subscribers data base program.

And thank you also for the tremendous response to the readership survey. The new guys will be publishing the results of that survey in their first edition which should be the September 15, 1991 edition.

We're planning on printing the August 30 edition on September 3 and mailing the following day due to the Labor Day weekend. The printer, his final issue, will be closed all weekend.

For those of you who have something to buy, sell or trade, send in your request by next issue and I'll try to devote a page to that exclusively. Even if you just want to hear from other wrestling fans across the country, that's okay. The only requirement is that you are a subscriber. Other than that, the space will be free.

Thanks to Ed Hammond of WIRL radio in Peoria for having me as a guest this past week. I'll be doing a weekly spot on their FREE phone line and I'll try to pass on that number as soon as I can. My next scheduled appearance on his show will be September 11, 6:05-7:00 PM. Those here in Central Illinois can tune in at 1290 on the AM dial.

Classes for me will start on September 10, so after that I may be even harder to get hold of than usual. For those who have been asking, I'll be attending Knox College in Galesburg, IL, and majoring in English and Education.

Also, next issue will feature a form letter that you might want to type up and send to Jack Petrick should the Herd/Dusty/Flair situation not improve. Usually I don't sanction this type of action, as I try to remain neutral. But since a promotion is dying, and we may be stuck with just the WWF and no alternative, I believe this would be in the best all round interest of wrestling.

Brickhouse Brown has returned to Memphis as M. C. Slammer and is doing a rap gimmick. It's going over like the proverbial lead balloon.

That's it for this time. Brace yourself for SummerScam next week and let me know if you survive.

See you the first week of September!

W R E S T L I N G FORUM

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